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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Documents of the Security Council (symbol S/. . .) are normally published in quarterly *Supplements* of the *Official Records of the Security Council*. The date of the document indicates the supplement in which it appears or in which information about it is given.

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2558th MEETING

Held in New York on Tuesday, 9 October 1984, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Basile Laetaré GUISSOU (Burkina Faso).

Present: The representatives of the following States: Burkina Faso, China, Egypt, France, India, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2558)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Letter dated 3 October 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16765)

The meeting was called to order at 4.05 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

1. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French):* I should like at the very outset to pay tribute to Mr. Mashingaidze, Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of September. I am sure I speak for all the members of the Council in expressing admiration and deep appreciation to Mr. Mashingaidze for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the business of the Council last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 3 October 1984 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16765)

2. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French):* I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Sipraseuth (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and Mr. Kasemsri (Thailand) took places at the Council table.

3. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French):* The Council is meeting today in response to the request contained in a letter dated 3 October 1984 from the representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the President of the Council [*S/16765*].

4. I should also like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to the following documents: S/16626, S/16684, S/16727, S/16736 and S/16761, containing the text of letters from the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and S/16641, S/16712, S/16719, S/16733, S/16747, S/16757 and S/16767, containing the text of letters from Thailand.

5. The first speaker is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr. Phoun Sipraseuth. I welcome him and invite him to make his statement.

6. Mr. SIPRASEUTH (Lao People's Democratic Republic) [*interpretation from French*]:* Mr. President, I should like first of all to express my great satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the Security Council this month. My pleasure is the greater because you are the representative of a country with which my own country enjoys excellent relations and shares certain affinities. Our two peoples have shared the same experience of a colonial past and are united by links of solidarity in their national liberation struggle to build a new progressive life in accordance with their respective interests. Indeed, our two peoples have followed a similar destiny, if I may so put it. I should also like to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Mashingaidze of Zimbabwe, for having discharged his functions so admirably during the month of September.

7. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank the Council for permitting me to come here to set forth the following very grave matters, which have a direct bearing on my country.

* Mr. Sipraseuth spoke in Lao. The French version of his statement was supplied by the delegation.

8. On 6 June, several battalions of the Thai Army, accompanied by tanks, armoured cars, artillery and reconnaissance aircraft, carried out an act of aggression against Lao territory and occupied three villages, namely, Bane May, Bane Kang and Bane Savang, in the Paklay district of the Sayaboury province, which lies about 200 kilometres to the north-west of Vientiane, our capital.

9. Immediately after their occupation, the Thai troops took draconian measures to change the characteristics of those three villages. They removed the frontier markers which had been placed in that area by France in agreement with Siam; they replaced Lao administrative authority by Thai administrative authority; they forced the villagers to register in the Thai records office; they replaced Lao currency with Thai currency; they transformed Lao schools into Thai schools; they replaced the traffic signs written in Lao by those written in Thai; they removed villagers by force, particularly young people, to Thailand, with a view to making them "Siamese"; and they sent Thai citizens into those villages to become assimilated with the Lao population there.

10. Furthermore, the Thai occupation troops engaged in plunder and pillage, repressing the villagers and raping women. They prevented the villagers from engaging in their agricultural work and prevented them from visiting their relatives in other villages by surrounding the area of the three villages with a network of mines. Trenches were dug and reinforcements and extra armaments were brought in with a view to carrying out a prolonged occupation.

11. Thai troops have been constantly firing on neighbouring areas, causing considerable loss of human life and material damage.

12. Along with these military activities and acts of repression, Thailand has organized a campaign of lies and propaganda and has claimed that the three villages are located in a sector over which neither Lao nor Thai sovereignty has yet been clearly established.

13. In order for the Council to be able to understand the problem more clearly, I should like to make the following points.

14. There is no question here of a frontier dispute or conflict of the kind that arises between two countries with a common frontier, but a clear-cut case of premeditated aggression.

15. For decades, in fact since the founding of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in the relations between Laos and Thailand there has never been any frontier dispute, either in the region of these three villages or indeed anywhere along the frontier laid down by the Franco-Siamese Convention of 13 February 1904, the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 23 March 1907 and the map which is annexed thereto. Let us recall that this is a line recognized by the International Court of Justice, as it was in the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear in 1962.[1] In the two joint Lao-Thai declarations of 1979, it was laid down that the two Prime Ministers agreed to make of the whole frontier—the river frontier and the land frontier—between Laos and Thailand, a frontier of peace and friendship on the basis of respect for the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, the legitimate interests of each side and the principle of the peaceful resolution of disputes between the two countries. This is a reciprocal commitment relating to respect for the historic frontier clearly set, and traced by precise boundary markers.

16. For fair-minded people in Thailand and indeed throughout the world, it is quite clear that the three villages belong to Laos; this is a matter of history, of law—treaties, maps, frontier markers—and is a consequence of the fact that administration has been established long since and has never been challenged. To justify the idea that these three villages belong to it, the Thai administration has produced the map drawn up jointly by the cartographic service of the Thai Army and the United States Army in 1978. It considers that this is a map drawn up by means of modern techniques and consequently it is in keeping with reality, in spite of the footnote at the bottom of the map stating that "the frontier lines on this map are not to be considered official". Now, why does Thailand claim the right to assert that a map it drew itself is the only valid one and why does it claim the right to force another country to recognize this? Why does Thailand not recognize the map drawn up in 1907 by the Franco-Siamese Mixed Commission of Delimitation, which hitherto the two parties have considered to be of a validity beyond question? And why does Thailand reject the map drawn by the Siamese Army in 1909, which is in keeping with the provisions of the Protocol of 1907?

17. Thailand puts forward arguments such as "because of the fact that the frontier is imprecise in this place . . . "the problem can easily be solved by peaceful means in a spirit of good-neighbourliness". In fact, if Thailand were sincere, why did it not discuss the matter beforehand with the Lao People's Democratic Republic? But instead of doing this, it mobilized sizeable forces to launch a large-scale attack against the three villages. It is easy to understand, however, that these arguments put forward by Thailand are nothing but deceitful words designed to cover up its aggression against Lao territory and a violation of its commitments to Laos under the joint Lao-Thai declarations of 1979 which provide that the two countries will settle their disputes by peaceful means. The violation by Thailand of its commitments is at the same time an infringement of the Charter of the United Nations, a sabotage of Lao-Thai relations, and the underlying cause of aggravation of tension in South-East Asia.

18. Furthermore, Thailand persists in the idea of establishing a technical commission to survey the terrain. Furthermore, it is even advocating the appointing

of a neutral country to supervise this action. This Thai stratagem consists in forcing Laos to re-examine the frontier in this area, thus creating a precedent for a wholesale revision of the frontier between the two countries. In fact, Thailand has already sent its own technical commission there to undertake unilaterally a new drawing of a frontier line.

19. The attack and occupation by Thailand of the three villages, as well as its other acts and false allegations, could not more clearly demonstrate its intention to call into question the historic line of the frontier. These intentions have been unambiguously expressed in statements from Thai ruling circles, for example the following one: "If one goes back to the agreement before 1946, one will see that the Lao provinces of Sayaboury and Champassak belong to Thailand and in accordance with previous treaties the whole of present Laos was Thai." When the Lao side showed juridically, with proof and evidence, treaties and relevant maps, that the three villages were indeed Lao, the Thai party dismissed the argument with the reply that those treaties had been signed under pressure from France.

20. If we make a brief review of the history of this matter, we shall see that the Lao and Thai people are both very well aware that the present north-east of Thailand before was Lao territory, and its 20 million inhabitants are Lao; they speak Lao and their traditions and customs are Lao, and they are bound by ties of kinship with the present population of Laos. It is true that this is a painful history for the Lao people. We are mentioning it here only to demonstrate the expansionism of Thai ruling circles. The just and correct position of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is based on its respect for the principle of the inviolability of historical frontiers, that is to say, its recognition of the present line of the frontiers as laid down in the international instruments signed by France and Siam in 1904 and 1907.

21. At the present time, the Thai side is continuing to make much of friendly brotherly relations, ethnic affinities between the Lao and the Thai peoples and the possibility of resolving the matter peacefully through negotiations. This is just misleading language designed to assuage the anger of the Lao people and the discontent of the Thai people with regard to Thai aggression. In fact, the acts of the Thai side contradict these words.

22. In spite of the occupation of its territory by Thai troops, the Lao side, demonstrating great patience, sent a delegation to Bangkok to negotiate with the Thai side. It made it clear that it was absolutely determined to resolve the problem peacefully. It put forward reasonable and just proposals and presented exhaustive and relevant proof of the age-old sovereignty of Laos over these three villages. Unfortunately, in the course of these negotiations, the Thai side had recourse to all kinds of manoeuvres and stratagems to avoid the just solution of the problem. Initially, the Thai side agreed to withdraw its troops from the three villages, to send the villagers back to their homes and to indemnify them for any losses they may have sustained, thus making possible a return to the normal situation that had existed before 6 June 1984. Then the Thai side imposed a condition on the withdrawal of its troops by forbidding the Lao party to send in its own troops. Worse still, it demanded that the two countries withdraw their troops 30 kilometres from the sector of the three villages. Then it demanded that the maintenance of the *status quo*, that is to say, that the occupation of the three villages by its troops continue. Finally, the Thai side proposed, according to a pre-established plan, to break off negotiations unilaterally.

23. The Thai claim that Viet Nam is intervening in this matter to inflate it is only a manoeuvre designed to mislead people and divide them. Indeed, everyone knows that Lao-Vietnamese relations, like those between the three Indo-Chinese countries, are relations of brotherly friendship and close alliance. They are brothers-in-arms, and this constitutes a factor ensuring the victory of the three countries in their struggle for the last few decades against the imperialist and colonialist aggressors. At the present stage of defending and building our country, it is more important than ever that these relations be strengthened and developed in all areas. The Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Laos and Viet Nam signed in 1977 and the declaration of the summit conference of Laos, Kampuchea and Viet Nam in 1983 [*see S/15626 of 28 February 1983*] reaffirmed the principles of solidarity, long-term co-operation and mutual assistance in the building and defence of each country formulated in a spirit of brotherly friendship, free consent, equality and mutual advantage and on the basis of respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and the principle of non-interference in each other's internal affairs; in a spirit of mutual understanding and with respect for the legitimate interests of each of the countries and the common interests of the three nations.

24. The principles governing these relations are in keeping with the Charter of the United Nations and are a threat to no country. Progressive peoples throughout the world can only welcome and support these good relations. Only the reactionary and imperialist forces strive to oppose these by all possible means. The three countries of Indo-China have reaffirmed their policy of peaceful coexistence with neighbouring countries. They have done everything in their power to encourage the dialogue between the countries of Indo-China and the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in an attempt to make of South-East Asia a zone of peace, stability, friendship and co-operation.

25. The act of aggression against the three Lao villages forms part of the annexationist designs of the reactionary forces of the Thai extreme right against Lao territory. It is the result of renascent pan-Thaiism. Their annexationist thirst will not be slaked by the occupation of just three villages. They still dream nostalgically of a past history of aggression and crime and

want to revive it. History shows that from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century the reactionary leaders of Siam committed aggression and annexation against the bulk of Lao territory, and that for 115 years, from 1778 to 1893, they subjugated Laos and made it a vassal of Siam. During the Second World War, from 1941 to 1946, Thailand relied on fascism and militarism to compel France to cede to it the two Lao provinces on the right bank of the Mekong, that is, Sayaboury and Champassak. In the course of the most recent imperialist war of aggression against the countries of Indo-China, Thailand became a military base and sent its own troops to fight alongside the aggressors. They made of Thai territory a sanctuary for the Pol Pot gangs and their accomplices, who were guilty of genocide, and a refuge for Indo-Chinese reactionaries in exile, who were engaging in activities hostile to the peoples of Laos, Viet Nam and Kampuchea.

26. The aggression committed against the three villages is a further step towards the implementation of the policy of hostility to the Lao People's Democratic Republic followed for the past nine years. This policy has been marked by subversive activities of many kinds: acts of armed provocation; military pressure; the creation of tension that jeopardizes the security of Laos; an economic blockade; collusion with the expansionists and hegemonists in order to maintain, train, organize and direct Lao reactionaries in exile, who are able to use Thai territory as a base for the preparation of acts of sabotage against Laos and from which to carry out psychological warfare and foment attempts at destabilization. Furthermore, Thai propaganda sows discord among the multi-ethnic Lao people and division between Laos and Viet Nam and weakens the solidarity of the three peoples of Indo-China.

27. The historical facts I have mentioned prove that the fundamental, unchanged policy of the reactionary Thai leaders against Laos is an expansionist one and that, in order to further that policy, its adherents consistently rely upon imperialist and reactionary forces.

28. The aggression against the three Lao villages forms part of the overall global designs of the extreme-right Thai reactionaries, who are in collusion with the expansionists and hegemonists against Laos and Indo-China. This is illustrated by their diplomatic activities undertaken prior to these incidents and in the course of negotiations.

29. The Lao people cherishes its independence and freedom, won at the cost of a heroic struggle that lasted more than 30 years and entailed heavy sacrifices. Therefore the Lao people is determined to safeguard its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; at the same time, it always respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries. Self-defence is for any country a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

30. Before this body, on behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I wish to reaffirm once again my country's unswerving policy of developing friendly and good-neighbourly relations with the Kingdom of Thailand. Laos and Thailand are two independent, sovereign countries that maintain diplomatic relations of equality. The Lao and Thai peoples are linked by ethnic affinities and maintain fraternal relations. Their two Governments signed two joint declarations in 1979 defining relations between them on the following bases: mutual respect for each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; respect for each country's right to choose its own way of life, free of interference or threat from outside; non-interference in the internal affairs of others and refraining from direct or indirect hostile acts against each other; settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter and on an equal footing; refraining from the use or threat of force in their relations and the prohibition of other countries from using their territory as a base for intervening in, threatening or attacking other countries in any way whatsoever.

31. This is the fortunate result of the history of the establishment and strengthening of relations between the two countries. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic will strive to defend and respect scrupulously the spirit and the letter of those two joint declarations. However, we demand that the Thai Government follow suit. The Thai side must forthwith withdraw its troops and administrative personnel from the three Lao villages totally and unconditionally, send home the villagers who were forcibly taken to Thailand, compensate the villagers for the losses in human life and property and restore the normal situation that prevailed in the region before 6 June 1984.

32. Just recently, the Thai delegation stated before the General Assembly that "the Royal Thai Government has decided to remove the Thai military presence from the three villages".[2] We are both interested and puzzled by that statement. What reasons and motives led that Government to take such a decision at this time and despite the failure of the two rounds of negotiation at Bangkok? In this connection, my delegation would like to make the following points.

33. First, the statement on the withdrawal of the Thai troops is insincere, as it contains no guarantee and gives no precise hour, date, month or year for the total withdrawal. On 3 October, one day after that statement, the spokesman for the Thai Ministry of foreign Affairs, Mr. Savanith Khongsiri, told Associated Press "that it is not a withdrawal, but a rotation". On 4 October, in the magazine *Far Eastern Economic Review*, in an article entitled "Face on the line", it was stated:

> "Thai Foreign Ministry officials say that the recent border clash between Thai and Lao troops at Uttaradit resulted from the Thai army relying on inaccurate survey maps prepared by the United States Army in 1978 which erroneously locate Lao villages on the Thai side of the frontier. According to these sources, the Foreign Ministry urged caution, but the

army proceeded to fortify the three contested villages, on the conviction that they were within Thai territory—an act taken as a provocation by Lao authorities. Although the Thai army has now accepted that the US maps may be in error, officials say considerable 'face' is involved and the army is resisting suggestions that it should quietly withdraw from the contested positions."

34. Secondly, Thailand stated it would withdraw its troops without, however, renouncing the maintenance of its administration, police force, para-military forces and administrative personnel in that part of our territory.

35. Thirdly, the withdrawal statement makes no mention of Lao sovereignty over those three villages.

36. Fourthly, the withdrawal statement says nothing about the return home of the villagers captured by the Thai troops, or about compensation for the human and material losses suffered by the population.

37. It is therefore clear that the statement on the withdrawal of the Thai troops does not go to the heart of the matter, that is, recognition of Lao sovereignty over the three villages and the normalization of the situation that existed in the region before 6 June 1984. Its aim, in fact, is to mislead international and Thai public opinion, which vigorously condemns the Thai extreme-right reactionaries for their aggression against part of Lao territory, and also to win the confidence of the international community in the Thai desire for peace in order to seek support for Thailand's candidacy for membership of the Security Council.

38. I wish to take this opportunity to make an urgent appeal to the Council to urge Thailand to respond quickly to the legitimate aforementioned demands of the Lao side and to abide by the Charter of the United Nations in its international relations.

39. We believe that in this way it will be possible to normalize the situation on the Lao-Thai frontier and the relations between the two countries in order to meet the aspirations and interests of both peoples and contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in South-East Asia.

40. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French)*: The next speaker is the representative of Thailand. I now call on him.

41. Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the responsibilities of the high office of President of the Security Council for this month. The fact that the Council has deemed it fitting that you should assume the presidency so soon after your presidency in August is a tribute to your recognized qualities and diplomatic skill, as well as a sign of the high esteem in which your country, Burkina Faso, is held by the international community.

42. I should also like to felicitate Mr. Mashingaidze of Zimbabwe, President of the Council for the month of September, for his invaluable contribution to the fulfilment of the primary functions of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

43. My delegation is grateful to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Council for the opportunity of coming before this body to present our stand on the issue of the three villages near the Thai-Lao border. Our gratitude is in no way diminished by the fact that, in the considered view of the Thai delegation, there exists no crisis, no situation, and indeed no issue deserving of attention by the representatives in this Chamber, who are already so much preoccupied with other business.

44. Allow me to extend my delegation's greetings to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Laos, in our common language: *Sawasdi, Pana-Than*.

45. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has made very many polemical statements of late, attempting to justify the obviously well-organized and co-ordinated campaign on his side on three counts. First, he attempts to justify his campaign by alleging that Thailand violated Lao sovereignty, particularly by sending troops to occupy the three villages. Secondly, he alleges that, in so doing, Thailand had designs on the whole border. In the statement he made before the General Assembly,[3] in support of this argument he cited something called "pan-Thaiism". Thirdly, he alludes to Thailand's candidature for a non-permanent seat in the Council, thereby establishing a linkage between the issue of the three villages and that candidature.

46. I shall now proceed to deal with those points one by one.

47. With regard to the first point, we should realize that the three villages cover only an area of 18 to 19 square kilometres, with a population numbering 1,100. These people are located in a remote and isolated part, deep in an area of mountains and dense vegetation, like small islands in the middle of an ocean. It has been and continues to be difficult to maintain access to them. The people are very poor, leading a meagre existence by subsistence farming on the hillside. They are of ethnic Thai-Lao origin, like most people who inhabit that vast corner of mainland South-East Asia. Indeed, people from this racial stock are scattered throughout southern China, northern Burma, north-western Viet Nam, and of course Laos and Thailand. They have a common linguistic tie and similar cultural traits and traditions.

48. I shall now enumerate the events that led to the recent incidents.

49. In the development plans, the Thai Government always gives a high priority to road-construction pro-

jects, not only to improve communications between different parts of the Kingdom, but also to provide access to rural areas. In our current five-year plan, there is a road-building project linking Nan and Uttaradit provinces in northern Thailand. Construction began about two years ago, and the projected road runs well inside our border.

50. In March 1984—this is actually when the recent incidents occurred—the road engineers and workers were harassed by armed Lao soldiers. As a result, some lightly armed volunteers were sent to perform guard duty at the construction site. On 15 April—and, again, this event occurred even before the magic date of 6 June mentioned by the Minister—Lao troops attacked these volunteers and some members of the border police well inside our territory. Between 24 and 25 May, there was again a clash between Lao troops and the Thai guardsmen 4 kilometres inside Thailand. On 28 May, the Royal Thai Government sent a note to the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic requesting an inquiry into the above-mentioned incidents and calling for immediate consultations between the two sides at the local level.

51. Here I should explain that there exists long-established machinery between Thailand and Laos for consultations and settlement of such problems. Apart from normal diplomatic channels, there is a Joint Border Committee, set up for the express purpose of solving problems of this nature at the Government and local levels. Provincial governors and officials on both sides also hold periodic meetings to cement ties in cultural and technical fields. Apart from trade links, there are several economic assistance projects extended by Thailand to Laos, including the agreement to purchase electric current from Nam Ngum dam, which is a significant source of foreign exchange for Laos. This latter agreement stems from the ongoing co-operation between the riparian States in the lower Mekong basin to harness the mighty river for economic development.

52. The Lao response to the Thai note of 28 May was that instructions were not forthcoming from Vientiane to proceed with such consultations. Meanwhile, a study of available maps gave the Thai authorities reasonable grounds to believe that the three villages were indeed, either wholly or partly, inside Thai territory. By that time Lao harassment and intimidation had become incessant, so much so that road construction came to a standstill. On 6 and 7 June, Thai regular troops were dispatched to provide protection and security for the work crew and to ensure continuation of the project. During this period, Thailand sought to clear up the issue through the Lao Embassy at Bangkok and the Royal Thai Embassy at Vientiane.

53. On 9 June, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic launched a campaign of acrimonious slander against Thailand. There were, indeed, demonstrations in so many parts of the world, in Paris and in various other capitals, all stemming from this issue of three small villages. Simultaneously, Hanoi joined in with its slanderous campaign in support of the Lao side. Thailand refrained from making any public statement which might aggravate the situation, being convinced all the while that the issue could be resolved peacefully through normal diplomatic channels or through the existing bilateral mechanisms. Laos, however, increased the level of polemics, necessitating a clarification of the issue by Thailand. This was done on 21 June in a letter to the Secretary-General [*S/16641*]. That was followed by the invitation to the Lao side at the beginning of July to send representatives to Bangkok for bilateral talks in order to resolve the problem in a peaceful manner.

54. The first round of talks was held at Bangkok between 21 and 23 July. It might perhaps be categorized as exploratory and no agreement was reached except that the next round of talks would also take place at Bangkok. Despite the tremendous expenses for the Royal Thai Government, and the complaint of the Budget Bureau, Thailand agreed to continue as host, as it is our tradition not to withhold hospitality, especially towards the Lao people. It was not possible to reach agreement on the various proposals. However, both parties publicly announced their concurrence on the need to adhere to the watershed principle on this issue.

55. The positions of the two sides at those talks can be summarized as follows:

—First, while both sides agreed to cease military confrontation, Laos demanded unilateral withdrawal of Thai troops. Thailand proposed to withdraw troops if Laos would agree not to reintroduce forces into the area, pending verification by both sides of the exact location of the watershed. Laos rejected the Thai proposal.

—Secondly, Thailand proposed that a Joint Technical Team be set up to undertake verification of the boundary line and that both sides agree to be bound by the team's findings. The Thai proposal was rejected by Laos.

—Thirdly, Laos demanded that Thailand compensate it for damage caused to the villagers. Thailand denied that any damage had been caused, but nevertheless proposed that both sides agree jointly to assess the damages which might have been suffered by the villagers and jointly to consider measures of assistance to those victims.

—Fourthly, Laos demanded that Thailand return the villagers to their homes. Thailand reassured Laos that no villagers were taken away or held by Thai authorities.

56. In a letter dated 23 August from the representative of Thailand to the Secretary-General [*S/16712*], it was further made clear that, after an impasse was reached in the talks, the Thai side still felt that ways and means

should be found to resolve the issue urgently in order to promote brotherly and friendly relations between Laos and Thailand, particularly between the peoples of the two countries.

57. The Royal Thai Government, therefore, sent its own technical team to undertake a survey in the area, in order to determine the exact location of the boundary. Should there be any doubt as to its findings, Thailand announced its readiness to have impartial experts conduct an independent survey on the terrain to verify Thai findings. At the same time, Thailand appealed to Laos not to engage in any military actions while the technical team was in the process of carrying out its peaceful mission. Unfortunately, the Thai appeal was not heeded. On the contrary, the Lao side mounted acts of provocation and harassment, thereby making it impossible for the Thai technical team to perform its task.

58. These Lao acts of provocation and harassment have been reported to the Secretary-General and subsequently to the Council in documents S/16719, S/16733, S/16747 and, more recently, by my letter dated 26 September [*S/16757*]. These incidents caused several Thai casualties, resulting in six deaths, and much damage to property.

59. On 2 October, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand made the following statement in the General Assembly:

> "With reference to the incidents near the Thai-Lao border, my Government regards them as minor border incidents which can unfortunately occur in any part of the world. The issue itself concerns only three small, remote villages covering an area of 19 square kilometres and with a population of 1,100 people. The matter arose when Lao troops began harassing a Thai work crew building a road some distance from those villages and well inside our border. Once military actions had taken place, it became difficult for either side to yield for fear of giving advantage to the other side.
>
> "This bilateral issue was further complicated by an undue interference from a third country, which has seized upon the opportunity to divert world attention from its military occupation of Kampuchea and to introduce an extraneous factor in the form of linkage to the Kampuchean problem.
>
> "It has long been the policy of the Royal Thai Government to maintain good-neighbourly relations with Laos. The issue of the three villages should not be permitted to stand in the way of improved relations between the two peoples, who speak the same language and have relatives on both sides of the border. Therefore, despite efforts of the other side to impede progress towards a peaceful settlement, the Royal Thai Government has decided to remove Thai military presence from the three villages in order to defuse the situation and bring about a peaceful solution to the problem."[4]

60. This peaceful initiative by the Royal Thai Government has led to the repositioning of Thai troops away from the three villages. Needless to say, without military protection it is no longer possible for Thai civilian personnel to remain in the area, because of possible harassment by Lao forces. The crisis has, therefore, become a non-crisis, and the first pretext by Laos has been deflated.

61. The crux of the matter boils down to the basic disagreement over the exact location of the boundary line in this small, remote, mountainous and forested area. The problem may be termed a technical one, because of the need for a joint survey to determine where the watershed line is actually located.

62. Regarding the second point raised by the Lao Minister, namely, that Thailand had designs on the whole length of the border, permit me to make the following observations.

63. The Royal Thai Government firmly adheres to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the rules of international law and the generally accepted norms of conduct between States.

64. The Franco-Siamese Treaty mentioned by Laos was concluded at the time when the Siamese Government was in no position to resist certain encroachments by the French colonial administration in Indo-China. As a consequence, the Treaty imposed undue disadvantages on Thailand to the benefit of Laos, which was then under French rule. Despite the natural desire of Thailand to renegotiate the unequal and inequitable provisions of the Treaty, successive Thai Governments have endeavoured to uphold the larger interest of good-neighbourliness with Laos.

65. I should also point out that the map distributed by the Lao side was made by French cartographers during the same period as the Treaty. It uses a scale so small that it is not suitable for the purpose of verification of the boundary line in the area in question. However, both the Thai and Lao sides are clear on the principle to be used to delineate this part of the Thai-Lao border. They concur in the watershed principle, in conformity with the Treaty.

66. In light of the foregoing, Thailand's effort to set up a joint technical team should be appreciated. Considering the remoteness of the three villages and the rugged terrain, mere possession or occupation cannot, *per se*, be proof of ownership.

67. Now that Thai troops have been redeployed away from the three villages thanks to the constructive initiative of the Royal Thai Government and its armed forces, there should be no obstacle to Laos' agreeing to establish a joint technical team with the Thai side. However, if Laos should now decide to renege on its stand in this regard, my delegation is ready to request the Secretary-General to dispatch to the area a fact-

finding mission for an on-site survey with the assistance of both Lao and Thai technical experts.

68. Meanwhile, both sides should refrain from any actions which might create a crisis of the present non-crisis. Such mutual restraint should extend to polemical debates and attacks on each other. The issue, which is a bilateral one, should not be subject to any third-party interference or exploitation whatsoever.

69. Finally, it is not entirely surprising that the issue of the three villages has been linked by the Lao Minister for Foreign Affairs to Thailand's candidature for membership on the Security Council, both in his statement before the General Assembly and in his statement in the meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as his statement here today. This linkage may indeed be the capstone of the whole Lao effort to malign and vilify Thailand's good name. Despite all the acrimonious rhetoric, the issue of the three villages may not be regarded by Laos as a big issue at all—but Thailand's candidature certainly is. This, for instance, would explain the fact that, in his statement before the General Assembly, the Lao Minister for Foreign Affairs took no note of the peaceful initiative of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand. Instead, he proceeded to cast aspersions and vituperance on Thailand. This would explain the Lao effort to have the meeting of countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement condemn Thailand. This would explain the Lao request for the present meeting of the Council. This would, of course, explain the ignoble linkage itself.

70. Indeed, it became obvious to my delegation that the original scheme, hatched in darker recesses than the Lao Mission, was to obstruct Thailand's candidature by ensuring that the elections would take place concurrently with a Council debate on Thai-Lao border incidents. The master plan was to make use of the obvious advantages that Laos has in the meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement to create an artificial controversy and then to follow with a Security Council debate at the same time that the elections were taking place in the General Assembly. The plot thickened as the election day approached. Then came Thailand's peaceful initiative to defuse the situation. The conspirators were caught in an awkward position and had to move up their timetable with an earlier request for the Council's meeting. Now that the members of the Non-Aligned Movement have refused to be parties to the scheme it remains to be seen what further steps in this well-orchestrated master plan will be taken by Laos to serve the interests of others.

71. I do not intend to dwell on our candidature, as this is not the appropriate time or place, and since my delegation is not the one that links the two matters together.

72. Permit me instead to summarize the stand of the Royal Thai Government on the issue of the three villages. That stand is as follows:

—First, Thailand is desirous of maintaining and improving its relations with neighbouring Laos.

—Secondly, Thailand is desirous of seeing an independent, sovereign, neutral and non-aligned Laos.

—Thirdly, Thailand does not harbour any desire for even an inch of Lao territory or a single Lao national. Indeed, Thailand is already burdened with over 70,000 refugees from Laos, and it would be helpful if Laos were to agree to accept them safely back.

—Fourthly, Thailand is mindful of the plight of land-locked and least developed countries, including Laos.

—Fifthly, to defuse the situation Thailand has removed the Thai military presence from the three villages. If Laos should resume military actions or harassment of Thai workers, then the full onus of responsibility would be on the Lao side.

—Sixthly, both sides should refrain from polemical or propaganda attacks on each other and should prevent any third-party interference in what is a bilateral issue.

—Seventhly, Thailand is prepared to accept the establishment of a joint technical team or of a fact-finding mission of the Secretary-General, with assistance from Lao and Thai technical experts.

—Eighthly, Thailand is prepared to accept the result of the findings of the joint technical team or mission, provided Laos agrees to the same.

—Ninthly, if the findings are not conclusive Thailand is prepared to resort to an impartial, independent technical expert or group of technical experts acceptable to both sides.

—Tenthly, Thailand would be prepared to resume negotiations with Laos on the basis of such findings in order to resolve the issue in a peaceful and constructive manner.

73. Having listened to the disparaging and acrimonious statements from the Lao side, from the Lao Minister for Foreign Affairs on down, it is hardly surprising that earlier negotiations have broken down. It is now time for the Lao delegation to heed its own counsel and to reflect on its own national character, of which the most attractive qualities are the dignity and gentleness which have won for it so many friends.

74. It is the earnest hope of my delegation that, despite occasional problems between two neighbours, both countries—Thailand and the Lao People's Democratic Republic—will look forward to a future of peaceful and constructive relations as befits two peoples who share a common language and age-old culture. The issue of the three villages should not be like the small pea in the fable about the princess with insomnia,

nor should it become a pretext for extraneous causes espoused by others or a wedge driven by others to divide the fraternal peoples of Laos and Thailand.

75. My delegation also hopes, Sir, that under your inspired presidency this Council will help create an appropriate atmosphere conducive to enhancing its role in accordance with the purposes and principles and provisions of the Charter, particularly to assist the parties in their effort to solve this bilateral problem peacefully and justly.

76. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French)*: The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply, and I now call upon him.

77. Mr. SRITHIRATH (Lao People's Democratic Republic) [*interpretation from French*]: I think that the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand on the withdrawal of troops in itself constitutes recognition of the aggression of his country against my country. It is unnecessary to say any more. But what I should like to emphasize here is the question whether bad faith rests with the Lao side or with the Thai side.

78. There is a saying that happy people have no history. That is true provided that certain leading circles in other countries do not create too many problems for them and do not consider relations between States as if they were taking place in a jungle. Thus it is with complete sincerity that the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic regrets that a portion of its territory is occupied by Thai troops and that this problem has to come before this body. We regret this fact not because the problem does not deserve such consideration; on the contrary, but because after two series of negotiations, which the Lao Government delegation undertook at Bangkok from 21 July to 15 August, no positive outcome was arrived at in those efforts, which were carried out in good faith.

79. Possessing the relevant title to sovereignty and the effective exercise of sovereignty for several centuries until 6 June 1984, the date of the occupation of that portion of Lao territory by Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic displayed its sincerity and its desire peacefully and expeditiously to settle this problem, by going to Bangkok, the capital of the army occupying Lao territory, to negotiate for more than one month with representatives of a country which committed premeditated armed aggression against us.

80. That attempt to settle the question clearly shows that our side truly displayed good faith, sincerity and goodwill to settle this matter by peaceful means. Let us remind the representative of Thailand, who as usual has engaged in a long and misplaced discourse against Laos, of the words of the head of the Thai delegation, who stated at the end of the first round of negotiations: "The Lao delegation deserves to be commended for its efforts to solve the conflict by peaceful means."

81. After the Thai delegation unilaterally took the initiative of proposing the second round of negotiations, the spokesman of the Thai delegation stated to Agence France Presse on 15 August 1984: "The dispute regarding the three villages cannot be settled around the negotiating table."

82. In the face of such a statement, men of good will may wonder where it is that the delegation of Thailand would like to solve this dispute. Before replying to that question, let us ask a second question, the response to which will give members the key to the first question: Why is it that the Thai side perseveres in this error to the detriment of the legitimate interests of the Thai people and of the Lao people?

83. For those of us who have followed the developments in South-East Asia, the chronology of the trips of the Thai leaders is revealing. Two days before the skirmishes against the local militia which defended the three villages, and the occupation of the villages by the first Thai cavalry division, the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Army, General Arthit Kamlang-Ek, had just returned from a trip abroad, including in his programme a fact-finding mission on the events in the south of China. It must be noted also that between the two rounds of Thai-Lao negotiations on the occupation of the territory of Laos, the Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs, accompanied by the head of the Thai delegation to those negotiations, went abroad. That is an unfortunate chronology for Thailand and for the Thai-Lao bilateral relations.

84. Let us say in passing that visits of individuals from other countries to Bangkok have led to the same results. The cause of this is the same. It is always the collusion of the Thais with the expansionists acting against our country.

85. Let us now refer to the facts which show that the Thai side has never been willing to settle the problem of the three villages. Acting as annexationists and hegemonists, Thailand has committed aggression and occupied the territory of Laos. It will strive to maintain and perpetuate its illegal occupation in order to begin the first stage in the chain of the rebirth of pan-Thaiism, hoping little by little to swallow Laos, to do what it did not succeed in doing in the past in its alliance with fascism and imperialism during its aggression against Laos, thus questioning once again a historic boundary defined from 1904 to 1907, conducting military adventurism as part of their foreign policy and creating new hotbeds of tension and instability in the region.

86. The Thai side has never been willing to settle the problem of the three villages. It is significant that on 26 July 1984, the date when the head of the Lao delegation returned to Vientiane for consultations, waiting for the Thai Government delegation to return from its visit abroad, the strongman of Bangkok, General Arthit Kamlang-Ek, brought together all the high officials of the three branches of the armed forces and of the police

at an ultra-secret meeting—according to the official reports of the police department—something which is very rare in Thailand, because we know that the army and the police do not get along well at all.

87. The content of that meeting was revealed quite by chance only on 20 August 1984, by the daily *Siam Rath*, managed by the Social Action Party, of which General Siddhi Savetsila, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, is the Vice-President. It stated:

> "According to highly placed sources, during that meeting General Arthit Kamlang-Ek has, in the name of national security, asked for the co-operation of the police so that it might replace the army in the occupation of the three Lao villages in the event of a possible future agreement at which the two sides may arrive concerning the problem of the sovereignty over the areas.
>
> "The police-operations centre proposed sending units of the border police to replace the military forces on the ground. For psychological reasons they will have to change their green uniform for the khaki uniform of the municipal police."

The units of the border police, established for purposes of social and political repression inside the country and provocation against neighbouring countries, are known for their cruelty and pillaging.

88. On 25 July 1984, the newspaper *The Nation*, which has good sources among the ruling circles in Thailand, revealed that the Thai officials had clearly stated that despite a possible withdrawal by the Thai troops from the three villages, the latter would remain under Thai authority.

89. According to *The Bangkok Post* of 25 September 1984, the first contingent of the inhabitants of the three villages was taken to Bangkok to receive paramilitary training and relieve the Thai troops, paramilitary training which was enlivened by visits to the flesh-pots of Bangkok and Pattaya and from the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Army, General Arthit Kamlang-Ek himself.

90. This long-standing desire of Thailand to occupy Lao territory in one way or another is reflected in the thinking out loud which is enjoyed so much by the Thai leaders. Publishing an interview with the Secretary-General of the Thai Security National Council, the newspaper *Siam Rath*, dated 30 July 1984, reported that

> "The Secretary-General of the National Security Council, Colonel Prasong Soonsiri, requested the Director-General of the Police, Kenom Seng Mitrong, to conduct psychological action in connection with the three villages. The targets of the psychological operation were to be the Lao population, those who supported the Lao people, the non-aligned countries, the inhabitants of the three villages and the Thai people. That psychological operation was to be conducted in conformity with the guidelines established at the meeting held on 20 June 1984 and attended by the heads of the three branches of the armed forces and the police and representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs."

91. This is in no way a cartographic error or a "minor incident" but rather a systematic plan of aggression and occupation of a portion of Lao territory and this plan has several aspects. We have looked at the military, political and international aspects, which are very closely interrelated in this plan. The progressive unveiling of this plan by the press and the Bangkok leaders meant the dropping of the last shield which was still camouflaging the annexationist and hegemonistic policy of pan-Thaiism.

92. On 5 August 1984, on the eve of the second round of the negotiations between Thailand and Laos, the newspaper of the party of the Thai Minister for Foreign Affairs advocated the organization of a plebiscite in the three villages occupied by the Thai Army since 6 June. The best intentions of Laos therefore were unsuccessful in the face of this desire for annexation and hegemony on the part of the Thai leaders. As far as Bangkok is concerned, problems are not supposed to be solved; they are supposed to linger on and be further exacerbated for the benefit of pan-Thaiism.

93. My country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, known for its desire for peace, equity and justice, has done and will do everything it can in order peacefully and expeditiously to solve the problem on the basis of the principles stipulated in the two joint declarations signed in 1979 by the Prime Ministers of the two countries. While defending our legitimate interests in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, we have attempted to safeguard the interests of Thailand and help it to save face, which explains the two rounds of negotiations held at Bangkok itself by the Lao Government delegation. Despite the unilateral break-off of the negotiations proposed by the Thai side, we are ready to resume the negotiations any time and anywhere. Although the Lao position is legitimate, since the matter is one of settling a dispute with Thailand, the Lao People's Democratic Republic knows that the best defence strategy is still diplomacy. In this connection, it scrupulously respects the provisions of the Charter.

94. As regards the issue raised by the representative of Thailand, namely, the manipulation of Laos by a foreign country, I should like to express my views as follows: we have here a country, Thailand, which has committed aggression and then has occupied Lao territory and which is now accusing the Lao people of having been manipulated in an underhanded way by Viet Nam! This is funny—actually it is sad—because it only reveals the military mentality of the extreme rightist reactionary leaders of Thailand. To set the record straight, let us quote a passage from the newspaper *Bangkok World* of 25 June 1984, which states:

"Supreme Command spokesman, Lieutenant General Samphao Sikhacha, has dismissed as a 'rumour', reports of a Vietnamese troop buildup near three disputed villages on the Thai-Lao border."*

95. We believe that the issue of the three villages is serious because it involves aggression and occupation of Laos. What is more serious is that Thailand is attempting to shirk its responsibilities and is not facing up to reality. The representative of Thailand's statement here is just polite words because he knows full well that the three villages belong to Laos. He knows that General Siddhi Savetsila, his Minister, publicly expressed regret in front of the Australian parliamentary delegation at the fact that he was absent from Bangkok when the matter arose. He knows that these three villages must be given back to Laos because they are Lao villages, because the *Siam Rath* of 24 September 1984, the journal of the Social Action Party, of which General Siddhi Savetsila is Vice-President, concluded its editorial with these words: "It is recommended that the three villages be returned once and for all to Laos". He knows that the *Far Eastern Economic Review* of 4 October 1984 stated in this connection:

"Thai Foreign Ministry officials say that the recent border clash between Thai and Lao troops in Uttaradit resulted from the Thai army relying on inaccurate survey maps prepared by the United States Army in 1978 which erroneously located Lao villages on the Thai side of the frontier. According to these sources, the Foreign Ministry urged caution, but the army proceeded to fortify the three contested villages ... Although the Thai army has now accepted that the US map may be in error, officials say considerable 'face' is involved and the army is resisting suggestions that it should quietly withdraw from the contested positions."*

96. To err is human; it is unpardonable, however, to persevere in the error. But this is not really the point. Thailand is secretly carrying out a long-premeditated plan to pursue a policy of annexationist pan-Thaiism. That attempt having been discovered, it is now talking about the problem of face-saving, as reported in *The Bangkok Post* of 1 October 1984, according to which "General Kamlang-Ek states that the unilateral withdrawal of troops from three villages will mean a loss of face for Thailand". Is this really a problem of loss of "face", or simply an expression of the fury of the supporters of the expansionist policy of pan-Thaiism caught in the very act? All these facts are very distressing for Thailand—they show who is manipulating whom.

97. I should like next to deal with the third point raised by the Thai side, concerning the map. I think that we must choose between what is true and what is false. We know full well that Thailand is the country of Sisanonsay, that is, of the professional braggart made into a national hero by Thailand. What we do not know so well is how far the Thai side will push this "dirty-trick" mentality, for that is what it is, as we have seen on several occasions in connection with the occupation of Lao territory. To distort reality in order to fool others is to degrade oneself and, which is even more unpleasant, at the same time degrade others. The map that we produced is there. It is the only relevant map for it is the outcome of the work of the Franco-Siamese Mixed Commission of Delimitation of the frontiers. That is the title of the Commission provided for in article 3 of the Convention of 13 February 1904. With regard to the Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear,[1] the International Court of Justice ruled on 15 June 1962 on this map established by the commission on the delimitation of borders between Indo-China and Siam as follows: "The Court considers that the acceptance of the Annex I map by the Parties caused the map to enter the treaty settlement and to become an integral part of it." Thailand, through the Army High Command, published an identical map on 18 February 1909 in the Siamese language. All the maps were distributed to the members of the Council.

98. It is astonishing that Thailand, which has requested and obtained funds from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the preservation of the Sukhothai and other archaeological sites as part of the heritage of mankind, should get involved in a sham quarrel about the old and new and set itself up as the champion of flashy modernism.

99. Thailand says that the so-called Thai map is more specific because of the kind of technology and the scale that were used. What biased lies there are in that short sentence! The map which we have submitted was called a French map by Thailand for its own purposes and to try to get it disqualified. It is not a French map, but a map drawn by the Franco-Siamese Mixed Commission of Delimitation of the frontiers between Indo-China and Siam, and it was annexed to the Treaty of 23 March 1907. This map of the Franco-Siamese Commission is the relevant one with regard to the three villages to the exclusion of any other maps which may have been drawn up unilaterally, such as the one in 1978.

100. This 1978 map, of which the Thai side has boasted, is not even a Thai map. It is an American map on which Bangkok, well known for its flourishing copying industry, has stuck certain names in Thai and which it has then photocopied. That is the trick. That is indeed the case because, two weeks after the aggression against and occupation of this portion of our territory by the Thai army, the Thai daily *The Nation*, of 21 June 1984, revealed that Thai jurists had met on several occasions in an attempt to find legal arguments to prove Thailand's rights over this portion of Lao territory.

101. Let us render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. This 1978 map, drawn up by the United

* Quoted in English by the speaker.

States Army, has a footnote which reads as follows: "Delimitation of international boundary must not be considered authoritative."* This was a useful precaution because in each new edition of the map—in 1962, 1965, 1972 and finally in 1978—the United States Army changed the boundary showing the area of the three villages. This change by the United States Army proves several things. First, it proves that so-called advanced technology is not trustworthy—this is the least critical hypothesis. On the other hand, according to experts in the geodesic triangulation method utilized by the Franco-Siamese Mixed Commission of Delimitation from 1904 to 1907, with a map on the scale of 1:200,000, the error, if there were one, would be of some 40 metres to 50 metres and therefore negligible. Secondly, the American services do engage in cartographic manipulation and we are therefore used to such things, which they do for psychological reasons, if only because most of these maps were drawn up during the period of their imperialist war of aggression in Indo-China.

102. I shall now take up the fourth of the issues raised by the Thai side. I wish to explain the view of my Government on the so-called technical on-site inspection team established by Thailand to attest to the veracity of the boundaries drawn up by France and Siam in accordance with the 1904 and 1907 agreements and the relative protocols.

103. Since these agreements were signed, neither of the two countries concerned—France, and later the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on the one hand and Thailand on the other—has challenged the position of the border. At the time of the visit of the Thai Prime Minister, General Kriengsak Chomanan, to Vientiane in 1979 and the visit of our Prime Minister, Mr. Kaysone Phomuihane, to Bangkok in the same year, the two sides had at no time expressed any doubts concerning the boundaries; rather, they reaffirmed the will of their respective Governments to ensure that the common border between the two countries should become a border of lasting peace and freindship. It was only in 1984, immediately following the visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the Thai Army, General Arthit Kamlang-Ek, that the question of the three villages became the subject of a challenge by Thailand. During the two rounds of negotiations in Bangkok, the Thai side constantly called for a joint technical team to be sent to the site. Of course we refused to go along with the proposal, no matter what the composition of the team—one-party, joint or tripartite—because we had already submitted to the Thai side conclusive evidence based on the map that was drawn up by the Franco-Siamese Commission with regard to the legal aspects of the problem, the administration and the population. In a word, Lao sovereignty over these three villages has been established in absolute terms. The exercise of territorial jurisdiction by Laos over these three villages cannot be disputed. On the other hand, Thailand can show no valid deed, title or right and therefore no sovereignty over these three villages, except by virtue of its occupation resulting from the armed aggression committed after 6 June 1984.

104. If we accepted the Thai proposal to carry out a joint or unilateral inspection of the area around the three villages this would amount to: first, failing to recognize the agreements signed between France and Siam and therefore failing to recognize the inviolability of the border recognized in the past; secondly, enabling Thai reactionaries and expansionists to destabilize not only Laos but also Cambodia on the pretext of false boundaries, particularly since the reactionaries in Bangkok are attempting to create a sort of buffer State between Thailand and the People's Republic of Kampuchea and thus establishing a dangerous precedent in the conduct of Thai policy towards its neighbours; and, thirdly, giving up our sovereignty over these villages and legalizing their occupation by Thai troops.

105. The fact that the Thai side unilaterally sent its own technical team to the area of the occupied Lao territory in no way proves its willingness to settle the problem by peaceful means. Rather, it is an attempt to distract world public opinion from the essence of the problem, which is Thai aggression against Laos and Lao sovereignty over the three villages. Unilateral inspection is designed only to justify Thai retention of these three villages.

106. This is the truth about Thailand's conduct in this matter. This border question is a crucial problem which demands circumspection and caution on the part of Thailand, a spirit of good-neighbourliness, a desire to stabilize relations between the two countries—qualities which Thailand has in no way demonstrated in this case. On the contrary, Thailand has acted arrogantly. The border markings exist; the Thai Army removes or destroys them. The Lao administration, which has been in that territory for centuries, is expelled from it by the Thai Army. That is the real manoeuvre carried out by Thailand and these are the views of the Lao Government concerning so-called on-site inspection.

107. I shall now move on to the last part of my statement, which concerns the withdrawal of the Thai troops.

108. A country that is the victim of aggression and occupation wants the aggressor and occupier to leave that country. Laos wants Thai troops to leave Lao territory; it wants Thailand to respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Laos. Unfortunately, a quite different situation has been created by Thailand. It is leading the relations between the two countries in a direction quite opposite to that whole-heartedly desired by the Lao and Thai peoples.

109. The logic of an army carrying out occupation and aggression is to install itself, in one form or another, on territory that has been taken by force. Even while

* Quoted in English by the speaker.

Thailand was negotiating with Laos at Bangkok, it planned and put into effect various measures to perpetuate its occupation of Lao territory, replace the army by border-police units wearing the uniform of the municipal police, replace the Thai military presence by paramilitary units wearing civilian clothes, and so forth. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand said the following on 2 October before the General Assembly: "the Royal Thai Government has decided to remove the Thai military presence from the three villages".[2] That innocuous phrase is replete with mental reservations and ulterior motives. The Thai Minister speaks simply of removing the military presence, but he maintains a modest but eloquent silence about the Thai police, paramilitary and administrative presence in the three Lao villages. So we have subtlety in the Thai statements and perfidy in the Thai intentions and actions.

110. Unfortunately, this much-heralded removal of the Thai military presence has not taken place so far. Thailand talks about it a lot; its friends talk about it a lot; but nothing is happening. It is a non-event. What we are really faced with is a campaign of publicity and, as such, of lies, rather than real political will. Otherwise, why did not the Thai Ministry for Foreign Affairs notify the Lao Embassy in Bangkok, or why did not its embassy at Vientiane discuss appropriate measures with the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Thailand makes endless pronouncements about its good faith, its sincerity, its good-neighbourliness, its love of peace and peaceful settlements of problems, but it is very reticent about its real intentions and very miserly about taking concrete, consistent action. It could not be otherwise, since this announcement is nothing but a diversionary tactic.

111. Two days after the announcement made by the Thai Minister—with such solemnity—to the General Assembly, General Thiab Kromsouriyachak, Commander of the third military region and responsible for the operations against the three Lao villages, was interviewed by the Bangkok newspaper *Matouphoum* and stated that he had received no instructions about any removal from the three villages and knew nothing about the statement by the Minister. Perhaps New York is too far from Bangkok and Uttaradit, where the General lives.

112. But no, it is not a problem of communications. The Thai Army has been stationed in the three Lao villages since 6 June, and it intends to stay there, purely and simply. The way in which this is done has little importance, as we learn from a dispatch by Agence France Presse from Bangkok dated 8 October:

> "Thailand has begun to redeploy its troops stationed in the three occupied Lao villages . . . a spokesman of the Thai Ministry for Foreign Affairs announced Monday in Bangkok . . . Sources close to the Thai General Staff and Ministry for Foreign Affairs emphasized, however, that the redeployment announced on Monday did not amount to a removal".

What a rich language Thai is: in one week we have gone from a "removal" to an "adjustment" to a "redeployment".

113. In fact, this linguistic subtlety has the sole purpose of hiding the facts, facts that are incontestable on the spot. And what is happening on the spot? In the three villages, Thailand has started bringing in reinforcements, both in manpower and in equipment, conscripting young persons by force, violating Lao airspace with its reconnaissance aircraft, indiscriminately firing 75-mm, 105-mm and 155-mm cannon at neighbouring villages, and causing thereby loss of life and property. Furthermore, the Thai Army has continued its provocative operations in other border regions adjoining Laos, and has amalgamated Thai troops with Lao reactionaries in exile, for the purpose of carrying out acts of sabotage in southern Sayaboury province. This army has threatened and held to ransom the people living on the banks of the Mekong, as well as commercial shipping.

114. According to information recently received from Laos and confirmed in the 9 October issue of *The Bangkok Post*, on Friday, 5 October, the Thai Army shelled three Lao villages, killing two persons and wounding five others; on Sunday, 7 October—that is, the day before yesterday—at about 5 p.m., at least 500 persons, including more than 100 families, were arrested and deported to Thailand. Now, according to still incomplete statistics, there had already been a first wave of arrests and deportations by Thailand of inhabitants of these three villages between 1 and 5 July, involving 438 persons. With those two figures, the number of victims taken to Thailand amounts to 938 of the 1,240 inhabitants of the three villages. Their houses, their gardens were burned and destroyed; their cattle were killed or taken away from them; their belongings were confiscated. This vandalism by Thai soldiers curiously reminds one of the policy of depopulating the neighbouring countries always pursued by Thailand; this policy is summed up in the curt order issued in 1828 by the Thai King Rama III to his general, Phaya Bodin, to raze Laos to the ground and make it a desert. He said: "Let nothing but water and land remain!"

115. Soon we shall see Thailand holding out its hat, begging for international assistance for the so-called refugees in this country. Once again we are going to witness a travesty undertaken by Thailand, turning its cruelty into a kind of self-interested philanthropy. The Thai leaders are growing fat and rich on the misfortunes of thousands upon thousands of people whose misfortunes they themselves have caused.

116. What can, what must Laos do in such circumstances? Should it turn the other cheek?

117. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has always chosen the policy of the peaceful settlement of disputes between the two countries by means of negotiation, on the basis of the principles laid down in the

two joint declarations of 1979. Nevertheless, it is determined to exercise its legitimate right of self-defence to preserve its independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, a right which hitherto it has not chosen to resort to.

118. Perhaps it might be worthwhile and it would not be superfluous to read Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations just to refresh the memory of those who tend to forget it. I quote: "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations."

119. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French):* The representative of Thailand has asked to speak in exercise of his right of reply.

120. Mr. KASEMSRI (Thailand): Having listened very carefully to the statement by the representative of Laos, I must say that it could perhaps be divided into two parts, one being concerned with technical matters regarding the boundary line that might more appropriately be raised in bilateral discussions between Laos and Thailand. The second part was highly polemical and I must say that the Lao representative has exceeded his quota of poison and polemics. This may derive from a figment of his own imagination or of his paranoia. Be that as it may, I think he has given Thailand more credit for subtlety than it deserves, either linguistically or otherwise, linguistically since we share the same language and we do not have the gift of inventing long words like "reactionaries" and "military cliques" and so on. This we have to borrow from our Lao colleague.

121. What is more important about his statement is that he takes the approach: "Let's have the cake and eat it too". For instance, with regard to our conciliatory initiative and effort to remove the Thai military presence from the three villages, he said that we did not remove our troops or, even if we did, then we did not remove the civilian administrative officials or the lightly armed paramilitary forces. I am not a military man, but it would seem that under such difficult circumstances as harassment from the Lao soldiers, and in view of the rather difficult terrain, logically the most vulnerable elements should be removed first rather than left behind without military protection to become easy targets for Lao guns. This should seem quite logical, I think, to most of us in this Chamber.

122. We take a different approach. Our approach is that, when in doubt, let's go and take a look together, and it boils down to what I have referred to as the technical point at issue, namely, where is the watershed line located, and that is all.

123. The Lao representative also mentioned two things which I feel compelled to say need some clarification. He started off by saying that the statement by my Minister for Foreign Affairs on the withdrawal of troops constitutes an admission of aggression against Laos. If such a conciliatory initiative or effort is to be interpreted as an admission of aggression, then the converse must also be true, namely, that whichever party or whichever side continues confrontation would have title to the land in question, would it not? Where would this interpretation lead us? Let us look at a concrete example. In the southern part of Africa we know that South Africa adamantly refuses to remove its military presence from Namibia. Does that mean, then, that South Africa has a just title to Namibia? It is a position which my delegation regards as completely untenable. I could cite other examples, but that would take time. I think this one single example is illustrative of the kind of subtlety engaged in by the representative of Laos.

124. He also mentioned the visits made by our Supreme Commander, implying of course that there must have been some kind of premeditated action in relation to the three villages. It so happens that the Supreme Commander had planned those visits well in advance, as is most often the case. He receives invitations from many quarters. In fact, he is invited right now by the Soviet Government to visit the Soveit Union. If he should accept such an invitation or invitations, would that automatically mean that he is in collusion with his good hosts? It is this kind of talk that explains the reason why earlier negotiations have not brought any fruitful result.

125. For its part, the Royal Thai Government wishes to conduct constructive negotiations, but we certainly will not permit the negotiations to become a propaganda forum, because that will not lead to any fruitful outcome. On the contrary, it will exacerbate tension, it will encourage third-party interference and it will not bring a peaceful solution any closer.

126. As I have said, the issues are minor border incidents which could occur in any country in any part of the world, and there is no reason why these incidents, happening in such a remote region, should become an obstacle to improved relations between two brotherly peoples who speak the same language.

127. The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from French):* The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply, and I call upon him.

128. Mr. SRITHIRATH (Lao People's Democratic Republic) [*interpretation from French*]: I should just like to say a few words about the last statement by the representative of Thailand. I would be happy were Thailand to respect the principle of the inviolability of borders, to which the representative of Thailand referred just now with regard to South Africa. He knows this very well because Thailand is comparing itself with South Africa.

129. I do not wish to dwell on this point; rather, I should like to say a few words by way of concluding my statement here in the Council.

130. It is a great pleasure, Sir, for the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to express to you our profound gratitude for the way in which you have considered our request to convene an urgent meeting of the Council to examine the situation on the Lao-Thai frontier, a situation created by the occupation of a part of Lao territory on 6 June 1984 by Thai troops. The way in which you have conducted these proceedings, your actions and your words, demonstrate your love for peace and your concern at anything that may threaten it. We should also like to extend our sincere gratitude to all the members of the Council who agreed to the urgent convening of this meeting.

131. Since it is quite unlikely that Thailand will really cease its occupation of part of Lao territory, we should like to request that the Council remain seized of this matter until it is brought to a successful conclusion. In so doing, the Council would be rendering a service to the Royal Thai Government and to the peoples of the two countries who are united by ties of blood, of culture, of habits, traditions and religion, and enable them to live together in peace and good-neighbourliness on the basis of the joint declarations made by the two countries in January and April of 1979. In facing the future resolutely, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic will do all in its power to achieve that goal.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

NOTES

[1] *Case concerning the Temple of Preah Vihear (Cambodia v. Thailand), Merits, Judgment of 15 June 1962: I.C.J. Reports 1962*, p. 6.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 17th meeting, para. 61.

[3] *Ibid.*, 17th meeting.

[4] *Ibid.*, 17th meeting, paras. 59-61.

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